LAST CONTEST

Powder Puff Derby Comes to Nostalgic End

TAMPA, Fla. (UPI)—Women fliers swarmed onto Tampa's Peter O. Knight airport Monday to bring a nostalgic end to the Powder Puff Derby, a transcontinental, all-women's air derby that was first held in 1947.

First across the finish line were Jan Gammell of El Cajon, Calif., and her copilot, Ilovene Potter of Federal Way, Wash. They landed their single-engine Comanche 260 Sunday afternoon.

More than 300 women fliers set out from Palm Springs, Calif., on Friday. Along the way across country, they made stops at Tucson, Ariz.; El Paso, Midland and Dallas, Tex., Shreveport, La., Jackson, Miss., and Thomasville, Ga., before taking off on the final leg to Tampa. Some of the stops were optional, however.

The final derby this year is a proficiency contest, not a speed race. The winners probably won't be decided until some time Wednesday.

This, the finale, is the 30th Powder Puff Derby, which began in 1947 under sponsorship of the Ninety-Nines, a women's flying organization. The derby missed only one year, in 1974, when it was canceled because of the fuel crisis.

The Ninety-Nines have decided to end the transcontinental air competition due to lack of funds and sponsorship.